



# Handel Messiah

IRISH BAROQUE ORCHESTRA  
PETER WHELAN



LINN





## **Messiah, HWV56**

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George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

**IRISH BAROQUE ORCHESTRA**

**IRISH BAROQUE CHOIR**

**PETER WHELAN** artistic director

**HILARY CRONIN** soprano

**HELEN CHARLSTON, ALEXANDER CHANCE,**

**NATHAN MERCIECA** alto

**GUY CUTTING** tenor

**FREDERICK LONG, EDWARD GRINT** bass

**First Part**

- |     |                                     |                                           |      |
|-----|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------|
| 1.  | Sinfonia                            |                                           | 2:39 |
| 2.  | Recitative<br>GUY CUTTING           | <i>Comfort ye</i>                         | 2:43 |
| 3.  | Aria<br>GUY CUTTING                 | <i>Ev'ry valley shall be exalted</i>      | 3:00 |
| 4.  | Chorus                              | <i>And the glory of the Lord</i>          | 2:27 |
| 5.  | Recitative<br>EDWARD GRINT          | <i>Thus saith the Lord</i>                | 1:20 |
| 6.  | Aria<br>ALEXANDER CHANCE            | <i>But who may abide</i>                  | 4:00 |
| 7.  | Chorus                              | <i>And he shall purify</i>                | 2:25 |
| 8.  | Recitative<br>HELEN CHARLSTON       | <i>Behold, a virgin shall conceive</i>    | 0:26 |
| 9.  | Aria with Chorus<br>HELEN CHARLSTON | <i>O thou that tellest good tidings</i>   | 4:51 |
| 10. | Recitative<br>EDWARD GRINT          | <i>For behold</i>                         | 1:55 |
| 11. | Aria<br>EDWARD GRINT                | <i>The people that walked in darkness</i> | 3:39 |
| 12. | Chorus                              | <i>For unto us a child is born</i>        | 3:44 |
| 13. | Pifa 'Pastoral Symphony'            |                                           | 1:32 |

|     |                               |                                         |      |
|-----|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------|
| 14. | Recitative<br>HILARY CRONIN   | <i>There were shepherds</i>             | 0:12 |
| 15. | Recitative<br>HILARY CRONIN   | <i>And lo, the angel of the Lord</i>    | 0:16 |
| 16. | Recitative<br>HILARY CRONIN   | <i>And the angel said</i>               | 0:30 |
| 17. | Recitative<br>HILARY CRONIN   | <i>And suddenly</i>                     | 0:16 |
| 18. | Chorus                        | <i>Glory to God in the highest</i>      | 1:42 |
| 19. | Aria<br>HILARY CRONIN         | <i>Rejoice greatly</i>                  | 4:09 |
| 20. | Recitative<br>HELEN CHARLSTON | <i>Then shall the eyes of the blind</i> | 0:23 |
| 21. | Aria<br>HELEN CHARLSTON       | <i>He shall feed his flock</i>          | 4:55 |
| 22. | Chorus                        | <i>His yoke is easy</i>                 | 2:10 |

## Second Part

|     |                             |                                         |       |
|-----|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------|
| 23. | Chorus                      | <i>Behold the lamb of God</i>           | 2:48  |
| 24. | Aria<br>HELEN CHARLSTON     | <i>He was despised</i>                  | 10:12 |
| 25. | Chorus                      | <i>Surely he hath borne our griefs</i>  | 1:39  |
| 26. | Chorus                      | <i>And with his stripes</i>             | 1:41  |
| 27. | Chorus                      | <i>All we like sheep</i>                | 3:23  |
| 28. | Recitative<br>GUY CUTTING   | <i>All they that see him</i>            | 0:35  |
| 29. | Chorus                      | <i>He trusted in God</i>                | 2:02  |
| 30. | Recitative<br>HILARY CRONIN | <i>Thy rebuke hath broken his heart</i> | 1:44  |
| 31. | Arioso<br>HILARY CRONIN     | <i>Behold and see</i>                   | 1:12  |
| 32. | Recitative<br>GUY CUTTING   | <i>He was cut off</i>                   | 0:12  |
| 33. | Aria<br>GUY CUTTING         | <i>But thou didst not leave</i>         | 2:05  |
| 34. | Chorus                      | <i>Lift up your heads</i>               | 2:48  |
| 35. | Recitative<br>GUY CUTTING   | <i>Unto which of the angels</i>         | 0:14  |

|     |                                                      |                                   |      |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------|
| 36. | Chorus                                               | <i>Let all the angels of God</i>  | 1:22 |
| 37. | Aria<br>ALEXANDER CHANCE                             | <i>Thou art gone up on high</i>   | 3:07 |
| 38. | Chorus                                               | <i>The Lord gave the word</i>     | 1:03 |
| 39. | Duet with Chorus<br>ALEXANDER CHANCE, NATHAN MERCECA | <i>How beautiful are the feet</i> | 3:08 |
| 40. | Aria<br>FREDERICK LONG                               | <i>Why do the nations</i>         | 1:13 |
| 41. | Chorus                                               | <i>Let us break their bonds</i>   | 1:41 |
| 42. | Recitative<br>GUY CUTTING                            | <i>He that dwelleth in heaven</i> | 0:10 |
| 43. | Aria<br>GUY CUTTING                                  | <i>Thou shalt break them</i>      | 1:49 |
| 44. | Chorus                                               | <i>Hallelujah</i>                 | 3:41 |

### **Third Part**

|     |                            |                                     |      |
|-----|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|------|
| 45. | Aria<br>HILARY CRONIN      | <i>I know that my redeemer</i>      | 5:19 |
| 46. | Chorus                     | <i>Since by man came death</i>      | 1:28 |
| 47. | Recitative<br>EDWARD GRINT | <i>Behold, I tell you a mystery</i> | 0:36 |

|     |                                       |                                |      |
|-----|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|
| 48. | Aria<br>EDWARD GRINT                  | <i>The trumpet shall sound</i> | 8:21 |
| 49. | Recitative<br>GUY CUTTING             | <i>Then shall be brought</i>   | 0:13 |
| 50. | Duet<br>ALEXANDER CHANCE, GUY CUTTING | <i>O death</i>                 | 0:58 |
| 51. | Chorus                                | <i>But thanks be to God</i>    | 1:58 |
| 52. | Aria<br>HELEN CHARLSTON               | <i>If God be for us</i>        | 4:57 |
| 53. | Chorus                                | <i>Worthy is the lamb</i>      | 3:01 |
| 54. | Chorus                                | <i>Amen</i>                    | 4:10 |

Total Running Time 128:26

## Handel's visit to Dublin and the first performance of *Messiah*

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In 1741 Handel's career had reached a crossroads: he was in his mid-50s and Italian *opera seria* based largely on Classical history or mythology had been the mainstay of his popularity (and income) since he had settled in London in 1712. But by the 1730s public taste was turning to newer forms including English-language opera on more contemporary themes. The lack of success of *Deidamia*, his final Italian opera which premiered in January 1741, was the catalyst for Handel to change course as a composer. Considering himself primarily an opera composer, it was with some reluctance that he had begun to write English-language oratorios in the 1730s. However, over the following decades he would go on to establish the English sacred oratorio as a large-scale dramatic work for soloists, choir and orchestra, most often based on Old Testament stories, and it would be these, including *Messiah*, that would cement his fame and popularity with later generations.

At the time that Handel composed *Messiah* in late August-September 1741 it is not at all clear what his plans were, although the relatively modest orchestral scoring (without the oboes and bassoons that he regularly used in his London performances) suggests that, at the least, he was keeping his options open. The decision to go to Dublin seems to have been taken fairly quickly, following an invitation from the Lord-Lieutenant, Lord Devonshire, to visit Dublin to give concerts in aid of a number of charities. A visit to Dublin thus presented an opportunity to present concerts for a new audience and to consider his future. But why Dublin?

In the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century Dublin was the 11<sup>th</sup> largest city in Europe and second only to London in the British Isles. Musicians and composers from continental Europe

regularly visited, including Francesco Geminiani, one of the leading Italian violinists and composers of his generation, who lived in Dublin between 1733 and 1740, returning in 1759 until his death in 1762. When it opened in 1741 the 'Great Musick Hall' in Fishamble Street was among the pioneering examples in Europe of a dedicated public concert hall (which London did not yet have). Dublin audiences were already familiar with Handel's music by the time he visited in 1741-2: although Italian *opera seria* was not staged in Dublin, by around 1726 John and William Neale (who were later to build the Fishamble Street music hall) were publishing arrangements of 'airs' from Handel's recent operas. *Acis and Galatea*, a serenata or 'pastoral opera' to an English text, entered the Dublin repertoire in May 1734, followed by the 'Utrecht' *Te Deum and Jubilate* and the *Coronation Anthems* in April 1736 for the first annual benefit concert in aid of Mercer's Hospital. The repertoire of these same works performed annually at subsequent Mercer's concerts established a close association of Handel's music with charitable occasions.

The Dublin newspapers reported the arrival of 'Dr Handel' on 18 November 1741. On 10 December he attended the annual Mercer's Hospital concert in St Andrew's Church (in which he may have accompanied his own works). Four days later he advertised his first series of six concerts to be held in Fishamble Street, beginning on 23 December with his recent pastoral ode *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* and several concertos. The *Dublin Journal* wrote that 'the performance was superior to anything of the kind in the kingdom before'. In a letter to Charles Jennens, the librettist of *Messiah*, Handel commented that 'the performance was received with general approbation. Signora Avoglio, which I brought with me from London pleases extraordinary, I have form'd an other tenor voice, which gives great satisfaction, the basses and counter tenors are very good, and the rest of the chorus singers ... do exceeding well'. The instrumentalists were led by Matthew Dubourg, an English violinist

who was Chief Composer and Master of the State Music at Dublin Castle from 1728 to 1764. The soprano Christina Avoglio had performed throughout Europe and would feature in the premiere of *Messiah*. The tenor was probably James Bailey, a member of the cathedral choirs, as were the other singers he refers to. Dublin has the unusual distinction of having two Protestant cathedrals, whose choirs at the time shared many of the same singers. This group of professional singers would provide most of the soloists and choir for Handel's Dublin concerts, including the first performances of *Messiah*. The contralto Susannah (Mrs) Cibber, who sang in subsequent concerts by Handel including *Messiah*, was best known as an actor but was also renowned for her expressive singing. She had apparently arrived in Dublin coincidentally to escape the recent scandal in London of an extra-marital affair.

Handel's first concert was repeated on 13 January and over the following weeks performances followed of *Acis and Galatea* and the *Ode for St Cecilia's Day*, as well as *Esther*, the first of Handel's English sacred oratorios which he had composed in 1732. On 1 February 1742 he gave an organ recital in St Patrick's Cathedral. Handel then presented a second series of concerts between 17 February and 7 April during which his 1736 ode *Alexander's Feast*, as well as *L'Allegro* and *Esther* were performed.

A public rehearsal of *Messiah* on 9 April was followed by its first performance on 13 April 1742, along with several organ concertos by Handel. This concert was a 'charity matinee' held for the relief of imprisoned debtors and for the support of both Mercer's Hospital and the Charitable Infirmary. A capacity audience of about 700 attended, a newspaper notice requesting 'the favour of the ladies not to come with hoops (hoop-framed skirts) ... The gentlemen are desired to come without their swords'. The overwhelming success of *Messiah* encouraged Handel to organise two further concerts, featuring the oratorio *Saul* on 25 May and a second performance of *Messiah* on 3 June.

Following what had been a successful visit, both musically and financially, he left Dublin for London on 13 August 1742, fully intending to return. An intriguing memento of his Irish visit is a unique traditional Irish melody he noted down, with the heading 'Der arme irische Junge' (the poor Irish boy) on a manuscript page that included sketches for *Messiah*. The first London performance of *Messiah* took place on 23 March 1743. In sharp contrast to its Dublin reception, the fact that it was premiered in a theatre raised considerable controversy from religious quarters and it was not until the 1745 London revival that *Messiah*'s status and popularity began to be established. Handel's fortunes as a composer of English oratorios now began to flourish, so that he no longer had reason to return to Dublin, his success there notwithstanding. Over the following 15 years he would compose a further 15 new oratorios, and when he died a wealthy man in London in 1759 at the age of 74 he was buried in Westminster Abbey.

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## A note by Peter Whelan

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On 13 April 1742, the brand-new music hall on Fishamble Street in Dublin, nestled cheek by jowl with the city's notorious 'Hell' district, hosted the premiere of Handel's *Messiah*. An early example of a one-way traffic system was implemented to cope with the street's congestion; panes of glass were removed from windows to improve ventilation, and ladies were asked to leave their dress hoops behind while gentlemen surrendered their swords to make more room.

The premiere was unconventional in many respects: a sacred oratorio performed in a secular theatre, with Susannah Cibber, whose reputation had been tarnished through a recent tabloid scandal, defiantly imploring the audience in real time for clemency through Handel's music. Sharing the spotlight was the soprano soloist, Signora Avoglio, whom Handel imported. What must Avoglio have thought at being upstaged by the less musically accomplished but dramatically compelling Mrs Cibber?

Handel relied heavily on the cathedral singers as his male soloists, but their participation in this performance hung in the balance. Jonathan Swift, Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, forbade their participation, dismissing Handel's band as a 'club of fiddlers'. But Dean Swift granted a last-minute reprieve, without which the performance could not have gone ahead. (The cathedral's 'gentlemen' were far from saintly themselves; one soloist, William Lambe, had recently been reprimanded by Swift for threatening violence during divine service.)

Proceeds from the concert supported Dublin charities still struggling in the aftermath of the Irish famine of 1740–41, a crisis whose mortality in some regions exceeded that of the Great Hunger a century later.

The orchestra was led by virtuoso violinist Matthew Dubourg, son of a dancing master and an 'Irishwoman', supported by the 'Irish State Musick' from Dublin Castle and assisted by their notorious instrument porter, George Hendricks – aka the body-snatcher, 'Crazy Crow'.

This recording, the first *Messiah* on historical instruments by an Irish ensemble, mostly follows the 'standard' modern version, but incorporates unique features related to the first performance in Dublin.

In our interpretation, we aim to evoke the intimate scale and theatrical atmosphere of the 1742 debut performance. We have based our choice of musicians and voices on the modest yet skilled forces Handel employed in Dublin, guided by David Hunter's research on the Irish State Musick musicians and by Donald Burrows's suggestions regarding possible choral numbers.

In our musical selection, we include the alto duet/chorus 'How beautiful are the feet', composed on Irish manuscript paper specifically for two countertenors from the Dublin cathedrals. This duet/chorus was performed at the premiere, but the chorus was replaced in later versions by the more familiar 'Their sound is gone out'.

Also featured here are the very arias sung by Susannah Cibber at that crowded 1742 debut, including 'He shall feed his flock' (alto solo version), 'He was despised', and 'If God be for us'. We also include two arias Handel composed for the celebrated castrato Guadagni, 'But who may abide' and 'Thou art gone up on high'. Guadagni visited Dublin in 1751 and obviously left a mark; he even had a racehorse named after him.

We hope this recording captures something of the atmosphere of that extraordinary moment in Dublin in 1742 and rekindles interest in the origins of this enduring masterpiece.

## Messiah

### First Part

1. *Sinfonia*  
Grave – Allegro moderato
2. *Recitative*  
Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God;  
speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her,  
that her warfare is accomplished,  
that her iniquity is pardoned.  
The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness:  
prepare ye the way of the Lord,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
ISAIAH 40: 1-3
3. *Aria*  
Ev'ry valley shall be exalted,  
and ev'ry mountain and hill made low,  
the crooked straight, and the rough places plain.  
ISAIAH 40: 4
4. *Chorus*  
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all flesh shall see it together;  
for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.  
ISAIAH 40: 5
5. *Recitative*  
Thus saith the Lord of hosts;  
yet once a little while, and I will shake the heavens,  
and the earth, the sea, and the dry land;  
and I will shake all nations;  
and the desire of all nations shall come.  
HAGGAI 2: 6-7  
  
The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple,  
even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in;  
behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.  
MALACHI 3: 1
6. *Aria*  
But who may abide the day of his coming?  
And who shall stand when he appeareth?  
For he is like a refiner's fire.  
MALACHI 3: 2
7. *Chorus*  
And he shall purify the sons of Levi,  
that they may offer unto the Lord an offering  
in righteousness.  
MALACHI 3: 3
8. *Recitative*  
Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son,  
and shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us.  
ISAIAH 7: 14; MATTHEW 1: 23
9. *Aria with Chorus*  
O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion,  
get thee up into the high mountain.  
O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem,  
lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid:  
say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God.  
ISAIAH 40: 9  
  
Arise, shine for thy light is come,  
and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.  
ISAIAH 60: 1
10. *Recitative*  
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,  
and gross darkness the people:  
but the Lord shall arise upon thee,  
and his glory shall be seen upon thee.  
And the Gentiles shall come to thy light,  
and kings to the brightness of thy rising.  
ISAIAH 60: 2-3

11. *Aria*  
The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death,  
upon them hath the light shined.  
ISAIAH 9: 2
12. *Chorus*  
For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder;  
and his name shall be called wonderful, counsellor,  
the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the prince of peace.  
ISAIAH 9: 6
13. Pifa 'Pastoral Symphony'
14. *Recitative*  
There were shepherds abiding in the field,  
keeping watch over their flock by night.  
LUKE 2: 8
15. *Recitative*  
And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them,  
and the glory of the Lord shone round about them,  
and they were sore afraid.  
LUKE 2: 9
16. *Recitative*  
And the angel said unto them: fear not; for behold,  
I bring you good tidings of great joy,  
which shall be to all people.  
For unto you is born this day, in the city of David,  
a saviour, which is Christ the Lord.  
LUKE 2: 10-11
17. *Recitative*  
And suddenly there was with the angel  
a multitude of the heavenly host,  
praising God and saying:  
LUKE 2: 13
18. *Chorus*  
Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth,  
good will towards men!  
LUKE 2: 14
19. *Aria*  
Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion,  
shout, O daughter of Jerusalem,  
behold, thy king cometh unto thee:  
he is the righteous Saviour;  
and he shall speak peace unto the heathen.  
ZECHARIAH 9: 9-10
20. *Recitative*  
Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
then shall the lame man leap as an hart,  
and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.  
ISAIAH 35: 5-6
21. *Aria*  
He shall feed his flock like a shepherd,  
and he shall gather the lambs with his arm,  
and carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead those that are with young.  
ISAIAH 40: 11  
  
Come unto him, all ye that labour,  
come unto him that are heavy laden,  
and he will give you rest.  
Take his yoke upon you, and learn of him,  
for he is meek and lowly of heart,  
and ye shall find rest unto your souls.  
MATTHEW 11: 28-29
22. *Chorus*  
His yoke is easy, his burthen is light.  
MATTHEW 11: 30

## Second Part

23. *Chorus*  
Behold the lamb of God,  
that taketh away the sin of the world.  
JOHN 1: 29
24. *Aria*  
He was despised and rejected of men,  
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.  
ISAIAH 53: 3  
  
He gave his back to the smiters,  
and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair:  
he hid not his face from shame and spitting.  
ISAIAH 50: 6
25. *Chorus*  
Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows:  
he was wounded for our transgressions,  
he was bruised for our iniquities;  
the chastisement of our peace was upon him.  
ISAIAH 53: 4-5
26. *Chorus*  
And with his stripes we are healed.  
ISAIAH 53: 5
27. *Chorus*  
All we like sheep have gone astray,  
we have turned every one to his own way,  
and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.  
ISAIAH 53: 6
28. *Recitative*  
All they that see him laugh him to scorn;  
they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying:  
PSALM 22: 7
29. *Chorus*  
He trusted in God, that he would deliver him:  
let him deliver him, if he delight in him.  
PSALM 22: 8
30. *Recitative*  
Thy rebuke hath broken his heart;  
he is full of heaviness:  
he looked for some to have pity on him,  
but there was no man,  
neither found he any to comfort him.  
PSALM 69: 20
31. *Arioso*  
Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow!  
LAMENTATIONS 1: 12
32. *Recitative*  
He was cut off out of the land of the living:  
for the transgressions of thy people was he stricken.  
ISAIAH 53: 8
33. *Aria*  
But thou didst not leave his soul in hell,  
nor didst thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption.  
PSALM 16: 10
34. *Chorus*  
Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
and the king of glory shall come in.  
Who is this king of glory?  
The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.  
Lift up your heads, O ye gates,  
and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,  
and the king of glory shall come in.  
Who is this king of glory?  
The Lord of hosts: he is the king of glory.  
PSALM 24: 7-10

35. *Recitative*  
Unto which of the angels said he at any time,  
thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?

HEBREWS 1: 5

36. *Chorus*  
Let all the angels of God worship him.

HEBREWS 1: 6

37. *Aria*  
Thou art gone up on high;  
thou hast led captivity captive,  
and received gifts for men,  
yea, even for thine enemies,  
that the Lord God might dwell among them.

PSALM 68: 19

38. *Chorus*  
The Lord gave the word:  
great was the company of the preachers.

PSALM 68: 11

39. *Duet with Chorus*  
How beautiful are the feet of him  
that bringeth glad tidings, tidings of salvation;  
that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth!

Break forth into joy, glad tidings,  
thy God reigneth!

ISAIAH 52: 7-9

40. *Aria*  
Why do the nations so furiously rage together?  
Why do the people imagine a vain thing?  
The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers  
take counsel together against the Lord,  
and his anointed.

PSALM 2: 1-2

41. *Chorus*  
Let us break their bonds asunder,  
and cast away their yokes from us.

PSALM 2: 3

42. *Recitative*  
He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn;  
the Lord shall have them in derision.

PSALM 2: 4

43. *Aria*  
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;  
thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

PSALM 2: 9

44. *Chorus*  
Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth,  
the kingdom of this world is become  
the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ;  
and he shall reign for ever and ever,  
king of kings, and Lord of lords. Hallelujah!

REVELATION 19: 16; 11: 15; 19: 6

### **Third Part**

45. *Aria*  
I know that my redeemer liveth, and that  
he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.  
And though worms destroy this body,  
yet in my flesh shall I see God.

JOB 19: 25-26

For now is Christ risen from the dead,  
the first fruits of them that sleep.

CORINTHIANS 15: 20

46. *Chorus*  
 Since by man came death,  
 by man also came the resurrection of the dead.  
 For as in Adam all die,  
 even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

CORINTHIANS 15: 21-22

47. *Recitative*  
 Behold, I tell you a mystery:  
 we shall not all sleep,  
 but we shall all be changed,  
 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,  
 at the last trumpet.

CORINTHIANS 15: 51-52

48. *Aria*  
 The trumpet shall sound,  
 and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,  
 and we shall be changed.  
 For this corruptible must put on incorruption,  
 and this mortal must put on immortality.

CORINTHIANS 15: 52-53

49. *Recitative*  
 Then shall be brought to pass  
 the saying that is written,  
 death is swallowed up in victory.

CORINTHIANS 15: 54

50. *Duet*  
 O death, where is thy sting?  
 O grave, where is thy victory?  
 The sting of death is sin,  
 and the strength of sin is the law.

CORINTHIANS 15: 55-5

51. *Chorus*  
 But thanks be to God, who giveth us  
 the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

CORINTHIANS 15: 57

52. *Aria*  
 If God be for us, who can be against us?  
 Who shall lay anything  
 to the charge of God's elect?  
 It is God that justifieth.  
 Who is he that condemneth?  
 It is Christ that died,  
 yea rather, that is risen again,  
 who is at the right hand of God,  
 who makes intercession for us.

ROMANS 8: 31/33-34

53. *Chorus*  
 Worthy is the lamb that was slain,  
 and hath redeemed us to God by his blood,  
 to receive power, and riches, and wisdom,  
 and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.  
 Blessing and honour, glory and power,  
 be unto him that sitteth upon the throne,  
 and unto the lamb, for ever and ever.

REVELATION 5: 12-14

54. *Chorus*  
 Amen.



## IRISH BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

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The Oliver Award-winning Irish Baroque Orchestra is acclaimed as Ireland's flagship period music ensemble and delivers world-class historically-informed performances across Ireland and abroad. Under the artistic direction of Peter Whelan, scholarship and musical excellence converge in a unique way through the IBO's work, creating an original offering like no other organisation on the Irish classical music scene. The founding of the Irish Baroque Choir in 2023 has deepened the ensemble's artistic identity, with high-profile collaborations including the BBC Proms in 2025.

As an ambassador for the stories of Ireland's musical past, the IBO uses its unique perspective to develop the growing store of knowledge surrounding the very early days of Baroque and Classical music in Ireland. The IBO's research, recordings and performances offer audiences across Ireland a new opportunity to reevaluate and reclaim their cultural heritage, while also engaging the Irish diaspora through the increasing global reach of this work. Even Handel's *Messiah* – an annual touring highlight in the IBO calendar – is a rekindled link to Dublin's cultural life in 1742.

In recent seasons the IBO has made high-profile debuts at the BBC Proms, the Edinburgh International Festival, the MA Festival Bruges and Summer at Snape. In Ireland, the IBO continues to work in partnership with a number of organisations, to bring excellent artistic experiences to audiences around the country.

The IBO is committed to developing the national scene for historically-informed performance and works with a number of partner organisations across Ireland to ensure its continued growth for future generations. The award-winning Irish Youth Baroque Orchestra (delivered in partnership with the Irish Association of Youth Orchestras) gives students the opportunity to work intensively on elements of period

style under the guidance of director Claire Duff. IBO's Apprentice programme supports students as they take their first steps into the profession, with several alumnae now working with the IBO as active professional musicians.

The Irish Baroque Orchestra is generously funded by the Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon. It also receives financial support from Culture Ireland to support an expanding international profile, and Dublin City Council for Dublin HandelFest. The orchestra has its own collection of period instruments, purchased with the assistance of an Arts Council capital grant and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The IBO is resident at the National Concert Hall, Dublin and as of 2021 is an ensemble and Board member of the Réseau Européen de Musique Ancienne (European Early Music Network).

## **PETER WHELAN**

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Olivier Award-winner Peter Whelan is among the most dynamic and versatile exponents of historical performance of his generation. He is Artistic Director of Irish Baroque Orchestra and Curator for Early Music of Norwegian Wind Ensemble. In addition to taking up the role of Artistic Partner with National Symphony Orchestra Ireland in January 2026, he becomes Music Director of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra from the 2026/2027 season and is Music Director Designate in 2025/2026. As a conductor, Peter has a particular passion for exploring and championing neglected music from the Baroque and Classical eras.

Engagements have included appearances with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Beethoven Orchester Bonn, Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra, Lahti Symphony

Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, The English Concert, Dunedin Consort and Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists. Other performances include Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* with San Francisco Opera, Vivaldi's *L'Olimpiade* with Irish National Opera (across Ireland and the Royal Opera House, London) and *Rodelinda* at Garsington Opera.

Highlights of past seasons include an appearance at the BBC Proms with the Irish Baroque Orchestra and visits to Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Meininger Hofkapelle, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, Tapiola Sinfonietta and Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists. Peter's artistic direction in live performance and the recording studio has been widely praised for its 'rich insight, style and charisma' (*The Guardian*), its 'stylish verve' (*BBC Music Magazine*) and 'energetic yet unfailingly sensitive direction' (*Gramophone*).

## HILARY CRONIN

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Praised by *Classical Voice North America* for her 'shining, rounded timbre', Hilary Cronin won both First Prize and the Audience Prize at the London Handel International Singing Competition.

Selected by *BBC Music Magazine* as a Rising Star, conductors with whom she has collaborated include Sofi Jeannin, David Bates, Kristian Bezuidenhout, Harry Bicket, Harry Christophers, Jonathan Cohen, Laurence Cummings, Christian Curnyn, Maxim Emelyanychev, John Eliot Gardiner, Nicholas Kraemer, Robert King, Stephen Layton, Paul McCreesh, Christophe Rousset, András Schiff and Dinis Sousa.

Operatic engagements have included the title role in Cesti's *L'Orontea* for Theater an der Wien, Piacere's *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* with Early Opera Company and the title role in *Semele* at Opera Holland Park. Hilary's regular collaborations with Irish Baroque Orchestra conducted by Peter Whelan have included the acclaimed performance of Handel's *Alexander's Feast* that marked the orchestra's debut at the BBC Proms.

## HELEN CHARLSTON

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Helen Charlston's ability to make each performance completely her own and her depth of connection with audiences has earned her international acclaim as 'one of the most exciting voices in the new generation of British singers' (*Gramophone*). She was a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist (2021–23), and was the 2023 Gramophone Award-winner for Best Concept Album and also collected the Vocal award at the BBC Music Magazine Awards for her second Delphian album, *Battle Cry*, the only recording that year to win at both ceremonies.

Helen has recently performed in recital at Brucknerhaus Linz, the Oxford International Song Festival, with the Prague Philharmonia at Lobkowitz Palace, Concertgebouw Amsterdam and Wigmore Hall. In concert she has performed with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, BBC Symphony Orchestra, and abroad: Casa da Música, Czech Philharmonic, De Nederlandse Bachvereniging, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, RIAS Kammerchor, WDR Köln, and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra in San Francisco.

## ALEXANDER CHANCE

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Alexander Chance was born in London in 1992, and educated at New College, Oxford, where he was a Choral Scholar and read Classics. He regularly works with many of the leading conductors in the early music world, including John Eliot Gardiner, Masaaki Suzuki, René Jacobs, Masato Suzuki, Harry Bicket, Laurence Cummings, Jonathan Cohen, John Butt, Kristian Bezuidenhout, Marcus Creed, David Bates and Lionel Meunier. He is in demand as a concert soloist and has given many recitals around Europe, making his recital debut at the Wigmore Hall and Concertgebouw Amsterdam in 2024.

His debut recording *Drop not, mine eyes* was named one of *Gramophone's* best albums of 2023. His opera roles include Oberon (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Britten) for The Grange Festival; Apollo (*Death in Venice*, Britten) for Welsh National Opera; and Tolomeo (*Giulio Cesare*, Handel) for English Touring Opera.

Other highlights include his debut appearance at the BBC Proms, regular appearances at Wigmore Hall with the London Handel Players, Fretwork, Arcangelo and other groups, solo recitals with The English Concert, Freiburger Barockorchester and Dunedin Consort, and Andronico in *Tamerlano* at the International Handel Festival in Karlsruhe. In 2022, he became the first countertenor to win the International Handel Singing Competition, also winning the Audience Prize.

## NATHAN MERCIECA

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Nathan Mercieca studied at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, where he was Senior Choral Exhibitioner, and subsequently completed postgraduate vocal studies at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama with Theresa Goble. Equally accomplished as a musicologist, Nathan holds a PhD in music from Royal Holloway, University of London. He researches topics in the analysis and philosophy of music and supervises a number of historical and analytical topics at Cambridge University, as well as appearing as a guest lecturer at the Royal Academy of Music.

Operatic and stage work includes Athamas in Handel's *Semele* at Opera Holland Park; Amos Gitai's *House* at the Barbican, Berliner Festspiele, Teatro di Roma and Teatros de Canal Madrid; and St. Catherine in Tom Floyd's *The Blue Margin* for Outland Opera. A keen exponent of contemporary opera, he has created several roles, including CJ in Warboy & Stewart's *Fierce Love*, and all the male roles in Lila Palmer's *These Wondering Stones*. Previously he has appeared as 'JL' in John Ramster's staging of Handel's *Messiah*, Xerse in Cavalli's *Il Xerse*, and Sorceress/Spirit in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. For the Royal Opera House he covered Peisander in Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* and workshopped the role of Yoël in Na'ama Zisser *Mamzer/Bastard*.

## GUY CUTTING

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British tenor Guy Cutting is recognised internationally for his compelling performances and refined musicianship, with a particular reputation in the music of J. S. Bach. He has performed across Europe's leading concert halls and festivals.

Guy is in great demand as Evangelists in Bach's St Matthew and St John Passions and Christmas Oratorio, working with ensembles such as the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Dunedin Consort and Orchestra18c. He has contributed extensively to the Netherlands Bach Society's 'All of Bach' video series. While Bach remains at the heart of his repertoire, Guy also performs a wide range of music from the early Baroque to the twenty-first century appearing with Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich and the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra.

Guy was a Choral Scholar at New College, Oxford, the inaugural recipient of the American Bach Soloists's Jeffrey Thomas Award and a Rising Star of the Enlightenment.

## FREDERICK LONG

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Frederick Long is garnering an international reputation for bringing vivid communication to both the operatic and concert stage. He is currently in particular demand in the music of the Baroque, to which his rich and flexible bass-baritone is ideally suited.

Of his performance at Lammermuir festival, *The Arts Desk* praised his 'charismatic Aeneas, agile and authoritative both in voice and movement'. Other highlights include Haydn's *Creation* with the Yorkshire Baroque Soloists and Bach's Christmas Oratorio in Dublin with the Irish Baroque Orchestra and Peter Whelan.

As well as IBO he is privileged to work with other leading ensembles including the Monteverdi Choir (as a guest soloist in performances of Bach and Handel at Teatro alla Scala, Milan, and Carnegie Hall, New York), and the Dunedin Consort, with whom he made an acclaimed debut in Bach's St Matthew Passion.

A versatile musician, he hugely enjoys collaborative music-making, and has been invited to sing with some of the UK's leading solo-voice ensembles, including I Fagiolini and Solomon's Knot. When avoiding work, Frederick can be found with his wife Emily and young children, pottering about the cider presses of Somerset.

## EDWARD GRINT

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Edward Grint studied at King's College, Cambridge, and at the Royal College of Music. Engagements include Seneca in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* on tour with Capella Mediterranea, Mozart's Mass in C minor with Scottish Chamber Orchestra, concerts with the Netherlands Bach Society, Ratcliffe in *Billy Budd* for the George Enescu Festival, Nelson Mass with Singapore Symphony Orchestra, his debut with The English Concert at Wigmore Hall, tours with Les Arts Florissant, Bach's Cantatas with Collegium Vocale Gent and Handel's *Messiah* with London Handel Festival.

Edward works with The King's Consort, London Mozart Players, Orchestra of the Age of the Enlightenment, London Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Les Musiciens du Louvre, Gabrieli Consort & Players, Dunedin Consort, Le Banquet Céleste and Oxford Bach Choir. Venues have included Salzburger Festspiele, Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg, Paris Philharmonie, Aix-en-Provence, Opéra Grand Avignon, Concertgebouw and Cadogan Hall.

## IRISH BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

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**PETER WHELAN** artistic director

**COLIN SCOBIE, ALICE EARLL, MARJA GAYNOR, HENRY TONG** violin 1

**HUW DANIEL, ANITA VEDRES, JENNA RAGGETT** violin 2

**KYLE MILLER, THOMAS KETTLE** viola

**SARAH MCMAHON, AOIFE NIC ATHLAOICH** cello

**MALACHY ROBINSON** bass

**ELOY ORZAIZ** organ

**TOM FOSTER** harpsichord

**DARREN MOORE, MICHAEL HARRISON** trumpet

**SCOTT BYWATER** timpani

**ALIYE CORNISH MOORE** CEO

**JOHN O'KANE** interim CEO (maternity cover)

**DOIREANN KELLY** general manager

**ALISON BYRNE** development officer

**SEBASTIAN GRUBE** development officer

## IRISH BAROQUE CHOIR

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**HILARY CRONIN, AMY WOOD, AISLING KENNY, CHARLOTTE O'HARE** soprano

**HELEN CHARLSTON, ALEXANDER CHANCE, NATHAN MERCIECA** alto

**GUY CUTTING, STUART KINSELLA, TOM KELLY** tenor

**FREDERICK LONG, EDWARD GRINT, ROBERT DAVIES** bass



**IRISH  
BAROQUE  
ORCHESTRA**

CEOLFHOIREANN  
BHARÓCACH  
na hÉIREANN



The IBO gratefully acknowledges the support of all those who donated to a crowdfunder to make this project a reality.

The following movements have been generously sponsored:

‘Comfort ye’ – Jürgen Uhlich

‘Ev’ry valley’ – Pat Liddy

‘And the glory of the Lord’ – Jennifer Caldwell

Pifa - Garret Dalton

‘He trusted in God’ – Brendan Cullen

‘Hallelujah’ – Lyndon MacCann

‘Behold, I tell you a mystery’ – Edel Creely

‘Then shall be brought’ – Felicity Maxwell

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Philip Hobbs

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Julia Thomas

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Timothée van der Stegen

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